

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Old United States Mint

AND/OR COMMON

Old United States Mint

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Fifth and Mission Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

California

06

San Francisco

075

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bureau of the Mint, U.S. Department of the Treasury

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Recorder's Office

Room 167

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall (Grove and Polk Streets)

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

\_\_\_EXCELLENT

\_\_\_GOOD

\_\_\_FAIR

\_\_\_DETERIORATED

\_\_\_RUINS

\_\_\_UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

\_\_\_UNALTERED

XALTERED

### CHECK ONE

\_\_\_ORIGINAL SITE

\_\_\_MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old U.S. Mint in San Francisco is certainly one of the finest of all classical-revival 19th century buildings on the west coast. The massive building of brick, faced with granite at the basement level and sandstone above that, was begun the year after the earthquake of 1868, which caused great damage in San Francisco. As a result, the building which is organized around an open courtyard after the plans of Treasury architect Alfred B. Mullett, was overdesigned sufficiently to withstand the even worse earthquake of 1906. The U.S. Mint was one of the very few buildings in the central district of San Francisco to survive.

The classical dress of the building includes a hexastyle Roman doric entrance portico at the Fifth Street side, with a simplified entablature featuring undecorated pediment and a frieze with triglyphs but no metopes. At the four corners of the building are projecting, square, three-bay pavilions with doric pilasters. The frieze portion of the pediment at the entrance is carried around the building, nicely tying the composition together visually. Although the building is certainly out of the mainstream of the western building tradition for this region, which lay with light wooden buildings, and therefore is without many peers, the Old U.S. Mint deserves to be recognized as one of the finest of classic-revival buildings ever done on the Pacific Coast.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1870

BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Alfred B. Mullett

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Begun in 1869 and completed in 1874, the Old U.S. Mint is the most magnificent Greek-Revival structure in California. The distinguished English-born architect, Alfred B. Mullett imported this entirely eastern style and imposed it in a monumental way somewhat unfamiliar to the western taste and tradition of light wooden buildings. One of the few buildings to survive the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the U.S. Mint is a remarkable example of a massive type of classical architecture referred to as Greek-Revival, which became enormously popular from one coast of America to the other in the mid-19th century.

Although the architectural importance of Alfred B. Mullett, architect of the mint, is well recognized, the designation of the mint as a national landmark rests upon its national significance in the westward expansion of America, and specifically upon the role it played in the period during which national boundaries were extended to the Pacific.

### History

The Old U.S. Mint at San Francisco, built 1869-1874, quickly took the rank of the principal mint in the entire U.S.A. It was one of the very few structures in the central part of San Francisco to survive the world-famous and devastating earthquake of 1906.

The people of San Francisco looked upon the mint building with pride and affection, and the new structure and the importance attached to it by the national government proved a source of satisfaction to the State of California and to the entire Pacific coast. It implied a recognition of the fact that although situated 3,000 miles or more from the seat of government, the people on the Pacific slope were important citizens of the Union.

By the time it opened in 1874, the San Francisco Mint had been placed on an independent basis, and was no longer a subordinate branch of the Philadelphia Mint. The San Francisco Mint took the rank of the principal mint in the country since it was the Federal depot for all gold and silver, and this was the period when tremendous mineral finds were developed in the region. Indeed, the great mass of silver from the Comstock Lode, necessitated construction of a new mint.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harold Kirker, California's Architectural Frontier (San Marino, 1960).

A History of Public Buildings Under Control of the Treasury Department (Washington, D.C., 1903).

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 0 5 52 3 2 0 4 1 8 6 8 0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C                                       

B                                         
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D                                       

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Dillon, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Historic Sites Survey

DATE

March 30, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

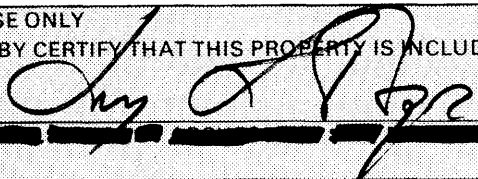
FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

10/12/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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In 1877 alone, for instance, the San Francisco Mint produced \$50 million worth of coins. By the 20th century, during the '30's, more than a million dollars of gold bullion a day came into the receiving room, and in 1934, one third of the country's entire gold reserves were housed in the San Francisco Mint.

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The Old U.S. Mint, San Francisco, is located at the Northwest corner of Fifth and Mission Streets in the "downtown" section of that city. Built around a courtyard, the massive building has a frontage of 220 feet on Fifth Street, and 160 feet on Mission Street. A 275 foot square plot was purchased by the Federal Government for \$100,000 on March 7, 1867, 13 years after this branch of the Philadelphia Mint was established. The historical extent of the site is clear then, and remains intact today as the boundary of this national historic landmark.

Extending 275 feet north and 275 feet west from the corner of Fifth and Mission Streets, these are the south and east boundaries. The north and west boundaries are then formed by lines perpendicular to the east and south boundary lines extending from the just-mentioned corner of Fifth and Mission Streets.